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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 2 July 2018, at 10 a.m.

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In the absence of Ms. Chatardova (Czechia), Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8)

(g) Public administration and development

1. **Ms. Fraser-Moleketi** (Chair of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration), speaking via video link from Johannesburg, introduced the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session (E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8). The theme of the session had been readying institutions for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Public institutions were critical to that process, yet the necessary public sector reforms remained a challenge in many countries. In that light, the Committee had agreed on a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development and had linked them to commonly used strategies endorsed in resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. It was encouraging that many experts had expressed interest in helping it to identify feasible, proven practices for implementing the strategies.

2. On the subject of institutional and policy coherence, the Committee suggested three pathways to improvement: simultaneous promotion of context-specific, inclusive coherence in both institutions and policies; structural attention and coordination using a broad range of tools, possibly accompanied by specific work programs or reforms, and a peer-to-peer learning mechanism.

3. Public fiscal management and oversight capacity remained a major challenge. The Committee recommended mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in national finance strategies, which would make it possible to align policy priorities with actual spending and, in the least developed countries, to ensure that development did not depend on aid alone. It had also made recommendations with regard to transparent reporting as well as to misconduct and corruption, and it had considered the question of enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities to support the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

4. At its eighteenth session, the Committee proposed to consider, *inter alia*, the governance and public administration aspects of empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies for the twenty-first

century; enhancing the capacity of the public sector in core functional areas of administration and progress on Goal 16. It would also contribute to the review of the implementation of the Goals to be conducted by the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2019.

Action on recommendations contained in the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session (E/2018/44-E/C.16/2018/8)

5. **The President** drew attention to the draft proposals contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report.

Section A

Draft resolution: Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session

6. *The draft resolution was adopted.*

Section B

Draft decision: Dates and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

7. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 11: Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits:

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (A/73/80-E/2018/58)

8. **Ms. 'Utoikamanu** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 (A/73/80-E/2018/58), said that with just two years left to reach the Programme of Action goals, implementation was at a critical juncture. Growth had begun to pick up in the least developed countries, rising to almost 5 per cent in 2017. However, the trend masked very uneven results, including some weakening. The fastest growing least developed countries were those with strong public and private investment, although oil commodity exporters had shown subdued growth because of falling oil prices. Overall, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) had increased between 2011 and 2016. However, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.90 per day had declined by a mere 5 per cent from 2010 to 2013 —

much too slowly to eradicate poverty by the 2020 Programme of Action deadline or even by 2030.

9. Three least developed countries had met the graduation criteria for the first time, bringing the total number to 12. That was encouraging progress but still far from the goal of enabling at least half of the countries to meet the criteria by 2020. In that connection, her Office was preparing a report on smooth transition measures and graduation support for submission to the Second Committee of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session.

10. Progress in enhancing and diversifying productive capacity had been limited, with considerable variation among countries. The contribution of manufacturing value added to growth had increased by less than 2 per cent. Services accounted for almost half of growth, and agriculture for around a quarter.

11. With regard to connectivity, mobile cellular subscriptions had leapt from 42 per cent to 68 per cent. Internet coverage had risen from 5 to 16 per cent and wireless Internet access, to just over 20 per cent. Overall access to electricity had shot to 38.3 per cent in 2014. However, four countries still had levels below 10 per cent, and the access gap between urban and rural communities remained pronounced. Achieving universal access to electricity would require major investments and improved governance of public utilities.

12. Despite having tripled from 2014 to 2015, the number of patents filed remained insignificant. In that connection, the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries had opened its offices in Gebze, Turkey, in June 2018.

13. Agriculture accounted for 60 per cent of total employment but generated only 26 per cent of value added in GDP. It was urgent to increase productivity through investment, training and access to critical inputs. In 2016, the already marginal share of exports from least developed countries had fallen to 0.89 per cent, mainly because of falling oil prices, thereby moving even further away from the 2 per cent target.

14. While school enrolment had improved somewhat, 40 per cent of all out-of-school children and adolescents were in the least developed countries. Maternal and infant mortality remained high, and in many countries, youth unemployment was alarmingly high.

15. Progress on gender equality had been uneven. However, the least developed countries were among the world's top performers in terms of parliamentary seats held by women. Furthermore, the gap between men and

women living below the poverty line had closed, and girls' enrolment in education had increased.

16. The years 2015, 2016 and 2017 had been the warmest on record. Natural disasters had affected an estimated 23 million people and claimed over 1,400 lives.

17. In 2017 bilateral aid from members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development had increased by 4 per cent to \$26 billion, reversing several years of decline. However, foreign direct investment flows had continued their downward trend, decreasing by 13 per cent in 2016 to \$38 billion, or a mere 2 per cent of global flows. Furthermore, most of the investment was concentrated in a few mineral- and oil-extracting countries.

18. Progress had been made in certain areas of governance and capacity-building such as planning processes, inter-ministerial coordination and engagement of diverse stakeholders, as well as on implementation of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

19. All stakeholders needed to make major efforts to implement the Programme of Action in the remaining two and a half years. Least developed countries should focus on building an enabling environment for the private sector, and their development partners should meet their commitments, including with respect to official development assistance and trade preferences. Continued support for the Technology Bank was essential, and graduating and graduated countries needed stronger support. Member States were invited to consider holding a fifth United Nations conference on the least developed countries to assess the implementation of the Programme of Action and decide on subsequent action.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions

(d) Human settlements (A/73/83-E/2018/62)

(k) United Nations Forum on Forests (E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9)

20. **Mr. Decorte** (Officer-in-Charge of the New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda (A/73/83-E/2018/62), said that since the adoption of the New Urban Agenda in 2016, challenges such as inequality, exclusion and segregation had intensified. Disadvantages continued to concentrate in specific

places and for specific people. Violence and forced migration were on the rise. Housing remained largely unaffordable, and development was consuming more land than necessary. Nevertheless, many cities remained places of innovation, social change and prosperity.

21. The report was the first in a series of five quadrennial reports to be presented to the General Assembly and complemented the Sustainable Development Goal 11 Synthesis Report. It provided suggestions for improving the reporting system, which should remain country-led and should build on the current work of United Nations agencies and development partners while integrating the actions of a wide range of stakeholders. It also made recommendations for implementing the New Urban Agenda.

22. Sustainable urbanization would contribute greatly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, it would require increased investments in urban monitoring and accelerated adjustment of policies and actions. UN-Habitat intended to be accountable and effective in fulfilling its focal point role.

23. **Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia), Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests, introducing the report of the Forum on its thirteenth session (E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9), said that it had been the first policy session since the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017–2030. In accordance with its quadrennial programme of work, the Forum had considered, inter alia, implementation of the United Nations strategic plan for forests; monitoring, assessment and reporting, and means of implementation. Under the agenda item on implementation, a ministerial round table had been held on forest-based solutions for accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The key messages that had emerged were contained in the Chair's summary in annex I of the report.

24. In its resolution 13/1, the Forum welcomed the announcement of several initial voluntary contributions and adopted a communication and outreach strategy for implementing the strategic plan. It welcomed the Collaborative Partnership on Forests workplan 2017–2020 as well as a joint workplan developed by major groups to accelerate achievement of the global forest goals. It adopted the format for initial voluntary national reporting and requested the Forum secretariat to prepare a flagship publication on progress towards achieving the global forest goals and targets for release by the end of 2021. It welcomed the progress made in developing a core set of forest-related indicators. It adopted guidelines for the operation of the Global Forest

Financing Facilitation Network, requested the secretariat to initiate development of an online Network clearing house mechanism and welcomed the offer of the Government of China to establish a Network office in Beijing. In connection with the ongoing reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, it stressed the importance of maintaining the ability of the Forum and the subprogramme on sustainable forest management to fulfil the Forum's mandate.

Draft decision: Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its thirteenth session and provisional agenda for its fourteenth session

25. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision entitled "Report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its thirteenth session and provisional agenda for its fourteenth session", contained in chapter I, section A, of the report of the United Nations Forum on Forests on its thirteenth session (E/2018/42-E/CN.18/2018/9).

26. *The draft decision was adopted.*

Agenda item 19: Social and human rights questions

(g) Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (E/2018/43-E/C.19/2018/11)

27. **Ms. Aboubakrine** (Mali), Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, introducing the report of the Permanent Forum on its seventeenth session (E/2018/43-E/C.19/2018/11), said that the theme had been indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources. On a positive note, some States had recognized those rights, and it was becoming increasingly clear that ensuring them contributed to addressing climate change and environmental degradation. In addition, regional mechanisms in Africa and Asia had issued decisions setting standards in that area.

28. However, there was a wide gap between formal recognition and actual implementation. Land or resources mapping, demarcation and titling were often delayed, shelved or left unfinished, and contradictory laws denied formally recognized rights. The majority of States had not officially recognized the indigenous peoples, let alone their rights to lands, territories and resources, and the Permanent Forum urged them to incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into national legislation, policies and programmes.

29. The Forum had heard a number of accounts of forced dispossession of indigenous peoples for development, business or conservation purposes.

Disproportionate numbers of indigenous leaders and human rights defenders were victims of intimidation and reprisal. Despite consistent evidence that ensuring indigenous peoples' right to their lands, territories and resources protected biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems, conservation efforts could have a grave impact, and the Forum was therefore asking the Council to authorize an international expert group meeting on that issue.

30. With regard to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the Forum appreciated the efforts of several States to develop national action plans in consultation with indigenous peoples and encouraged others to do likewise. It had stressed the need for more ambitious goals for the consultations on enhancing the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations, and it had encouraged the United Nations country teams to facilitate dialogue between indigenous peoples and Member States to support implementation of the system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples.

31. With respect to the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, the Permanent Forum had welcomed the related action plan and had called on the States to support its implementation. In its deliberations on women, youth and children, it had recommended that the Commission on the Status of Women should organize a high-level interactive dialogue on the rights of indigenous women in 2020.

32. Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, the Forum had emphasized that they could not be achieved without fulfilling the rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources and had called on States to include the recognition of those rights under Goal 2. It had also reiterated the need to include indigenous peoples in the voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and it encouraged States to work with indigenous peoples to develop guidelines for responsible renewable energy development in the context of Goal 7.

33. At the 2018 session, the Forum had adopted a new method of work, devoting the first week to plenary meetings and the second to regional dialogues with indigenous peoples and Member States. The new format had been well received and would be continued at the 2019 session. The Forum had also continued the practice of holding closed dialogue meetings with the Member States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies.

34. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decisions contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft decision I: International expert group meeting on the theme "Conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples"

Draft decision II: Venue and dates for the eighteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Draft decision III: Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its seventeenth session and provisional agenda for its eighteenth session

35. *Draft decisions I, II and III were adopted.*

Agenda item 12: Coordination, programme and other questions (continued)

(f) Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (continued) (E/2018/L.16)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.16: United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

36. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

37. **Mr. Varganov** (Russian Federation), introducing draft resolution E/2018/L.16, said that the Russian Federation continued to give priority to the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. Thanks to efforts in 2017, the Task Force should have a comprehensive report with recommendations for future action in time for the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

38. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Council) announced that Belarus, Belgium, France, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Thailand and Uruguay had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

39. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.16 was adopted.*

40. **Ms. González** (Uruguay), emphasizing the importance of closer coordination among the United Nations agencies participating in the Task Force, said that it should expand its efforts in the legislative and regulatory field, where it could develop model laws for controlling the risk factors for non-communicable diseases, for example. It should also provide advice on grappling with interference from industry. In addition, the Task Force could contribute to capacity building by promoting the exchange of experience and best practices.

Agenda item 18: Economic and environmental questions (continued)

(i) Geospatial information (continued) (E/2018/L.15)

Draft resolution E/2018/L.15: Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disaster

41. **The President** said that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

42. **Ms. Azucena** (Philippines), introducing draft resolution E/2018/L.15 on behalf of Jamaica and her own delegation, said that the draft resolution endorsed the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters and drew on the principles of the Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, the 2030 Agenda and General Assembly resolution 69/243 on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development. It was intended to guide stakeholders and partners in the management of geospatial information and services in all phases of disaster risk management. It presented five priorities for action and invited Member States, the United Nations system, international organizations, donors, the private sector, academia and non-governmental organizations to adopt the Strategic Framework in accordance with their mandates.

43. **Mr. Mahmassani** (Secretary of the Council) announced that Ireland, the Netherlands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Thailand and Vietnam had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

44. *Draft resolution E/2018/L.15 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.